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**INFORMATION REPORT**

COUNTRY Poland

SUBJECT Procedures for Joining CP and Trade Unions/Resultant Privileges/Importance of Membership Cards

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Procedure for Joining CP

2. "In order to be admitted into the CP in Poland today one must be a pretty young person. In the first years of the Communist regime lots of people were rather indiscriminately admitted into the Party; now an older person may gain admission in exceptional cases only.
3. "No pressure is exercised on people to join the CP. On the contrary, in the last two years [1952-1953] the bulk of new members have been recruited from the ranks of the ZMP (Youth League). The CP is making no efforts to seek new members outside its ranks. Twice a year the CP conducts a so-called 'personnel action' all over the country, a sort of review of young people who show political promise. The object of the action is the selection of young people for future duties in the CP and also in the various professions and vocations.
4. "As soon as a young man arouses the benevolent attention of a CP delegate during a 'personnel action', the Party takes him under its wings. If he continues to come up to expectations, they suggest to him that he should join the Party.
5. "The application for admission to the CP is written on a special form and filed with the secretariat of the local CP organization POI (Podstawowa Organizacja Partyzna). It must be accompanied by a very detailed autobiography and the recommendations (guarantees) of two CP members whose length of membership has not been less than one year.

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6. "During the days or even weeks after filing the application the applicant is invited to call on the POP secretary two or three times for general 'orientation' talks. The subjects of these talks vary widely but always concern some aspect of the applicant's autobiography. In the course of this time the documents on the applicant are sent to the district CP committee, together with a character report made by the POP secretary. At the same time all data in the autobiography of the applicant are checked by the UB authorities in all the places where the applicant has ever resided.
  7. "When the UB has sent the results of its investigations to the district committee, the latter weighs the case and returns the papers of the applicant to the POP where he filed the application, together with its opinion of the applicant's eligibility.
  8. "If this opinion is positive, the POP secretary introduces the item 'Admission of new candidates (members)' on the agenda of a forthcoming meeting of the organization. Should, however, the POP secretary have noticed in the meantime that the applicant was weak in theory or suffered some ideological misconceptions, he may advise him to attend a course or may appoint an old and experienced comrade to instruct him before his admission can take place.
  9. "After all these preparations the actual admission at a POP meeting is merely a formality. At such meetings the admission of new members or candidates is always the last item on the agenda. The procedure is that the new candidate (member) goes to the platform (or rostrum). He must tell the meeting all about himself, beginning with his autobiography. Attendance at this meeting is compulsory for those two members who gave their recommendation to the candidate when he made the application. All those present must speak in the discussion that follows and say everything they know or have heard about the candidate. It may happen, though rarely, that the discussion reveals that the candidate has not mentioned some incident of his life in the autobiography. If he cannot explain satisfactorily why and how he has kept it secret, the whole procedure of admission is interrupted until the next meeting. New investigations are conducted in the meantime. If everything goes well the chairman of the presidium puts the application of the candidate to the vote by show of hands. The questions are: 'Who is for admission, who is against and who abstains?'
  10. "A week or two after the candidate has been admitted he gets his 'legitimation' (Party card) from the POP secretary. The secretary warns him at the same time how carefully he must keep it and states the disciplinary penalties for its loss. In Poland these penalties are not so heavy as in the USSR and do not lead to expulsion from the Party.
  11. "The registration and control over the issue of membership cards is conducted at the district committee. After the period of candidacy the same procedure is repeated to admit the candidate as a full member. The period of candidacy usually lasts one year but can be shortened to six months in exceptional cases. It also can be prolonged, in exceptional cases. If a candidate has not conducted himself well during the year of probation his card is taken from him and he sinks back into the anonymous mass - with the difference that he is perhaps more strictly watched than the ordinary citizen who has never drawn attention to himself.
- Privileges of CP Membership
12. "The bare fact of being a CP member does not automatically bring a better life to that member. An ordinary worker or a scientist scarcely profits from membership. The so-called CP rank and file live as poorly as the rest of the community and have the same low standard.

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13. "Where membership is of real value is in all kinds of promotion. A CP member always has priority in such cases. Membership is most important for the career of a civil servant or a trade union functionary.
14. "The present upper class in Poland does not consist of CP members as such but of CP members who hold Party, government or police posts.
15. Procedure for Joining Trade Union  
"Practically no formalities are required for joining a trade union. Most people find themselves in a union almost automatically. The only thing required of a person is to sign a form at his place of work. If he does not want to join he need not. The majority do because trade union membership carries with it certain privileges and advantages with regard to medical assistance, the purchase of cheap cinema and theatre tickets, the distribution of places at health resorts, etc.
16. Importance of Membership Cards  
"People usually carry the trade union membership card with them as they do all personal papers, but it is far less important than the Party card. A person holding a Party card is not so easily detained by the police or by controls in the street or on railway trains - even if he happens not to have all his identity papers with him. To lose a trade union card is unimportant - one can always get a new one. To lose a CP card is much more serious. The punishment itself is not the worst that happens; that is merely a 'disciplinary Party warning' which is entered in the minutes of the POP meeting. The hard thing is to get a new Party card. A person has to wait for it 8-10 months, advertise in the papers (the organ of the local 'rada narodowa') and undergo a lot of questioning from the CP and the UB."

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